



DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

Breaking Ground

IN THIS ISSUE

Arts Issue in
partnership with
Tennessee Arts
Commission

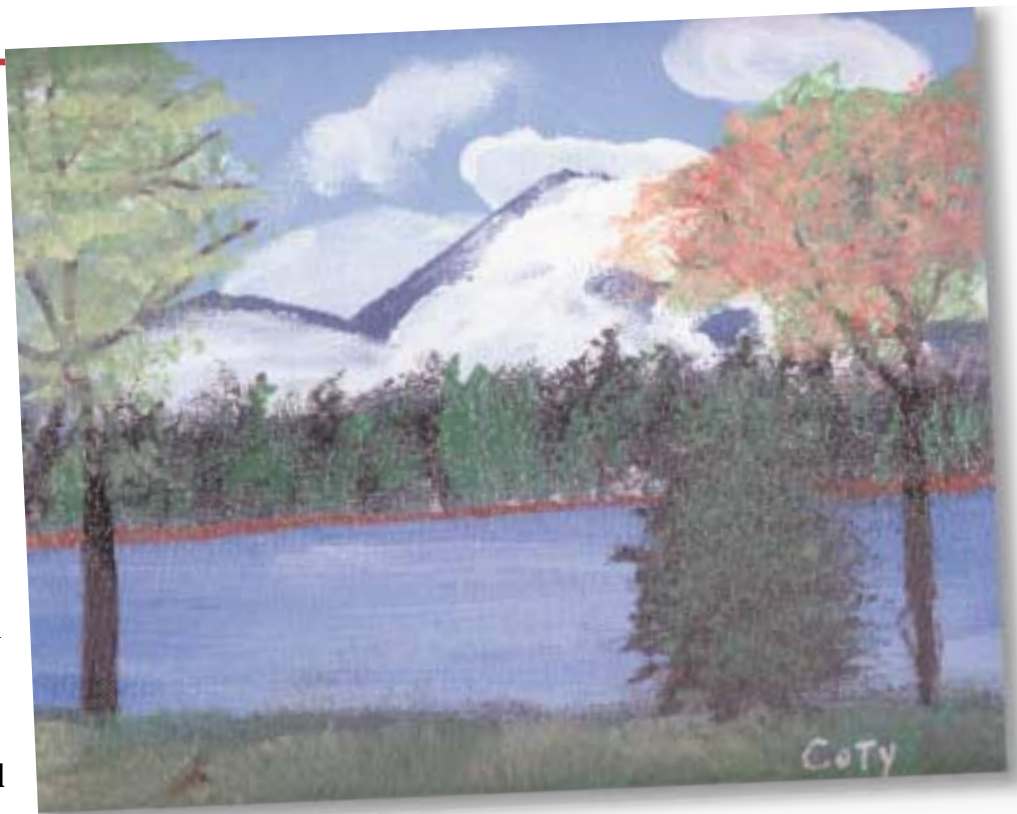
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Summer Arts Issue



Coty Matthew, 12, is studying painting with a local artist in his hometown, Spring City. Coty, who has autism, is fully included at his elementary school. He is proficient with drums and recently performed in a band competition. Last fall he was elected to represent the school band during homecoming. Coty receives speech and pathology therapies at school and speech pathology services at a private facility.



"Summer Vacation 3"

Michael Johnson of Evanston, Illinois, is a full-time working artist. He has illustrated two children's books. Mr. Johnson, who has Down syndrome, has more than 100 paintings in his catalogue, many displayed on his Web site. See www.psin.com/~sharing/Michael/ "A Boy Who Liked Color," an exhibit of 21 of Mr. Johnson's works, continues through September at the John F. Kennedy Center / MRL Building, corner of 21st Avenue South and Edgehill Avenue, on the campus of Peabody College of Vanderbilt University.



"Bugs"

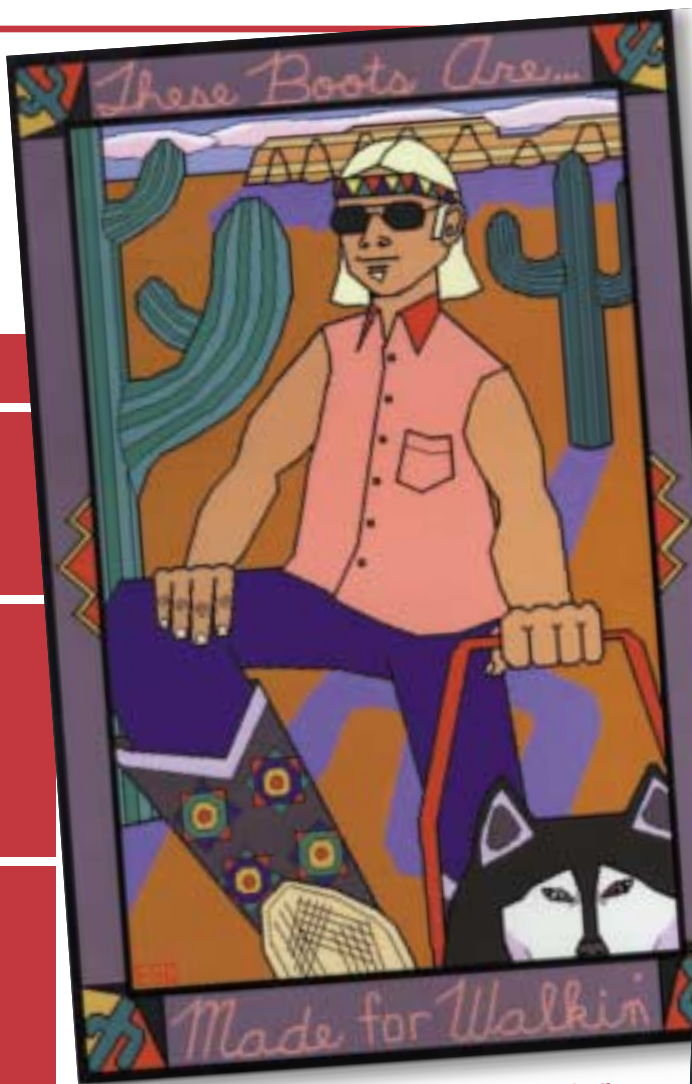
Matthew writes, "These are bugs that should be in 'Bugs Life: the Movie 2.' L to R top row: grand-daddy long legs (note eyeglasses), red ant with a major eye problem, Bubble Bee, Blue Ant with freckles (Flick's cousin), a worm, a butterfly admiring herself, a very angry yellow jacket, and a very cool termite who is really dumb."

Warren Hall is a 42-year-old resident of the Maple 2 home at Arlington Developmental Center. He is employed at Cards-N-Things and enjoys participating in art shows at ADC.



Matthew Copaus, 10, loves to draw, write stories, and play video games with his dad and little brother, Christian. At age 4 1/2 Matthew was diagnosed with autism.

He is homeschooled and is in the fourth grade. His favorite subject is literature. When he turns 20, he wants to be married to a beautiful woman and have two children.



"These Boots are Made for Walkin'"

Erin Brady Worsham, who contributed to the Summer Arts Issue of *Breaking Ground* last year, did a Christmas card commission for the Prentke Romich Company, which makes her Liberator communication device. She also created a Christmas card for Western Kentucky University. This month she has work on display at "kickstART!", a celebration of disability arts and culture in Vancouver. She lives in Nashville.



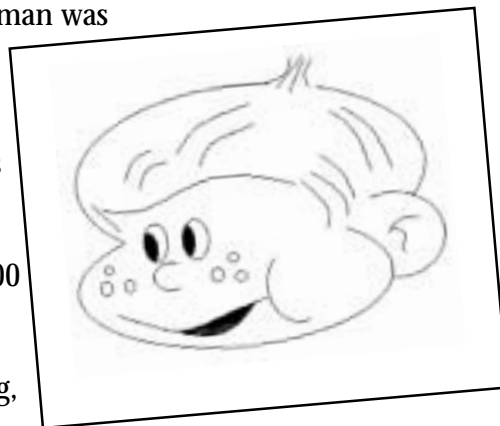
"The Woody"

Sydney Maitland is a Policeman in Trenton for a Day

By Sydney Maitland

People who break the law have to be arrested when they are caught and punished for what they did wrong. My mom says doing things wrong is not right. There are laws to follow like do not kill, and do not speed in the car, and do not drink alcohol or eat drugs. Mom says not following the laws and rules is committing crime. Another crime is to lie to the judge in court. Lying is wrong too. I try not to lie. I try not to break the rules because I would be punished and put in jail.

If I was a policeman, I would put somebody in jail if they did not obey the rules of the city or the town or the suburb or the farm community. There are Police Reports in the newspaper that tell us about people who might get put in jail. They have to go to court to see if the judge will send them to jail first. Two store clerks got put in jail for selling beer to kids in Rutherford January 26, 2001. That same week, three men were arrested for trying to steal farm chemicals, trying to make drugs out of the chemicals, and for having drugs in the car. The Trenton newspaper had twenty-three people listed who broke the law and got put in jail. One man was arrested because he ran away from the policeman. I don't know why he ran from the police. A man from Trenton was arrested for stealing something under \$500.00. My mom says stealing something under \$500.00 is called theft. Another man was arrested for aggravated assault. Aggravated assault means hitting, biting, and fighting with anger. One man was arrested for DUI. DUI means driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.



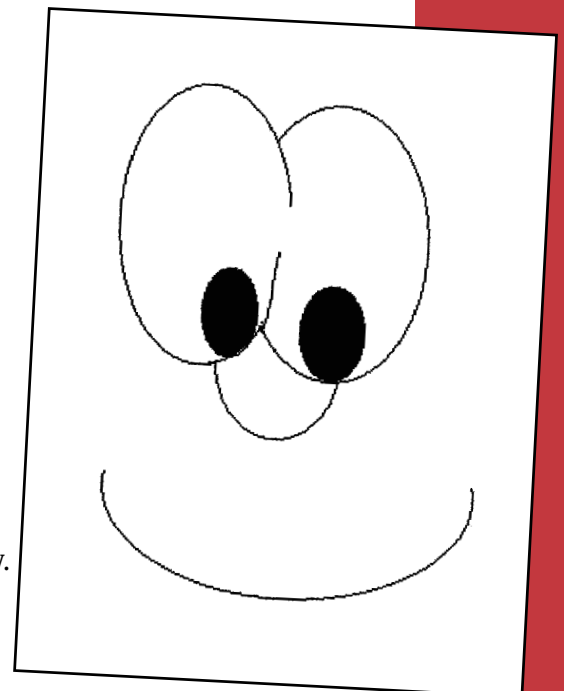
Jason McClure, of Sevierville, is learning how to draw using a computer. He has cerebral palsy.

The police arrest people who drink and drive because they might have a wreck and hurt someone like my mom's friend Gracie. Someone ran over Gracie and now she has no legs. Gracie is not dead though. Mom says she sings like an angel. She has beautiful hair, and I love her.

There were two people who went to jail for domestic assault. Domestic assault means that people who live together and maybe are even married were fighting. I don't know why they were fighting. My mom and dad do not fight. I am glad because I don't want them to go to jail.

If I was a policeman in the city of Trenton, I would try to put everyone who breaks the rules and laws in jail. They would have to stay there for a very long time. I would not like to break the rules and go to jail!

Sidney Maitland, 7, wrote this essay in Mrs. Jeannie Ward's second grade classroom at Spring Hill School, Gibson County, Tennessee.



Musings on Life and Death

By Lois Symington

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I am not a lover of mice, and as a rule I prefer not to live or work in the same room with them. It's not that I'm afraid of them, but rather I speculate on what might happen. For example, what if one were to crawl into my carrying bag and reappear on the floor of my car? Further leaps of speculation make me wonder what might happen next, if the mouse were to crawl up my pant leg while I was driving. The safer solution seems to be to eliminate their presence in places in which I live and work.

The events of this past week have changed my perspective on living with mice. On the weekend our magnificent black and white fluffy cat succumbed to cancer. A month ago she was flitting around the rafters of the woodshed, winding around our ankles, and dropping in our tracks to demand that we stop and pet her. She died on the basement floor, too weak to drink or lift her head in response to our loving strokes.

On Monday of this week the father of a close friend died. Although he was in his 90's and had lived a full and meaningful life, his passing came too close to home. I sat and thought, during the funeral, of how I would handle the loss of my own family members. When we got home from the funeral, we had a phone call that a friend and neighbor had also died.

This friend and his wife and family had sat in front of us in church for 15 years, and John had played on the farm where we now live. My heart went out to his widow—only nine years away from their 50th wedding anniversary—and the loneliness of years ahead for her.

Also on Tuesday, we learned that our son's battle with cancer was not over.

The doctor suggested, in fact, that his survival depended on further surgery to prevent the spread of cancer.

My musings about death had extended from losing my own father to losing my husband or son. Our friend's mother, a woman in her 80's, had seemed so peaceful about her son's death. When we expressed our regret at the loss of her only son, she said, "These things happen. We must accept them. But you don't expect to outlive your children, do you?" I admired her faith and trust in fate or God but wasn't sure it was mine.

Therefore, when I got to work on Thursday and found that the mouse who had made his presence known by droppings for the last month was a living presence on the floor, I realized I had an immediate life or death situation in front of me.

The other staff and I briefly discussed means of extermination: catching him, dropping him out the window, feeding him to a cat. And then we simply watched this little gray creature poking around the boxes and bags on our floor. He was instinctively looking for food and a warm place to sleep. Another storm was brewing outside, with dark, cold clouds rolling in over the mountains.

After a few minutes, by unspoken consent, we returned to work. The presence of death was too strong in all our lives and thoughts to willingly cause the death of an innocent creature. We picked the bags off the floor and left him to his scratching and skittering. Whether or not there is anything beyond this plane or continuum of life and death seemed irrelevant. We could celebrate life and that was enough.

Lois Symington is director of the East Tennessee Technology Access Center, Inc., and the parent of a 26-year-old son with disabilities. She says, "This essay was written in February, 2000, one month after my son was diagnosed with testicular cancer. At the time of writing, three of our staff and I were working at Greene Valley Developmental Center in Greeneville, Tennessee."



The Arts Open New Worlds for Grace

By Leisa Hammett-Goad

Atlanta artist Martha Jane Peterson says art is the wellspring of the soul. For people with disabilities, I believe that art is a window for the world. A view for the world that opens to a vista of gifts, potential and often otherwise unrecognized capabilities of people with disabilities.

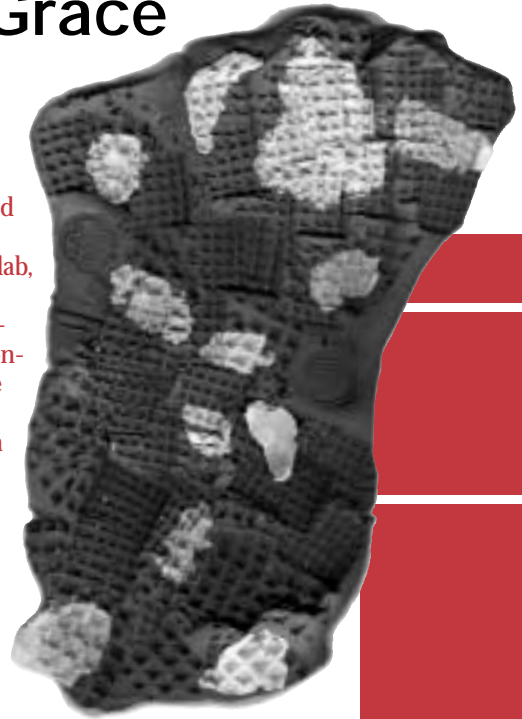
A year into my daughter's intensive early intervention therapies for autism, I began seeking therapeutic opportunities through the arts. I realized had she been born typically developing she would have been taking art, music and dance lessons like her peers. But classes, facilities and instructors trained to teach adaptive techniques alongside typically developing peers are a rarity in Middle Tennessee. What a shame that our special children often miss out on the joy and complementary learning opportunities provided by the arts.

I decided that would not be the case for Grace. After much networking to uncover resources, we began with a few lessons with movement therapist Susan Eaton who showed me how to teach Grace rhythm, to move with her and to use movement as a tool to connect and communicate. We still use these tools today, four years later.

Next, we added music therapy with music therapist Sue George who first used improvisational methods with Grace. As my daughter's communication skills increased, Sue worked with Grace's private speech therapist, Jane Pramuk, and created opportunities for Grace to use her budding vocabulary. Sue even devised songs to facilitate potty training. Grace loved her sessions.

George explains that music is the only medium that activates both the left and right hemispheres of the brain. When we sing to Grace, she pays attention!

Art educator/art therapist Jennifer Hudgins laid out a lump of clay for seven-year-old client Grace Goad. Grace proceeded to roll the clay into a slab, selected a couple of rubber stamps to create some impressions in the clay and added contrasting white pieces. Next she took a meat hammer and pounded the design with such vigor, Jennifer had to step out of her way to prevent getting inadvertently pounded her self. Despite her mighty pounding, which created the waffle-design in the clay, Grace was very intentional in protecting the stamped areas.



Two years ago we added art therapy, hiring Jennifer Hudgins to work with Grace. This therapy has been the most exciting. When Grace began with Jennifer she only scribbled. After a while she was able to work her way out of scribbles and into horizontal strokes engaging the whole arm and serving as a prerequisite to writing. From there Grace has ventured into collages and other mixed media creating stunning works of art.

This is a child who still struggles to communicate hello and goodbye and her name but ever so intently studies her composition and her choice of colors, exhibiting a keen sense of color and design.

The arts are one venue that underscore that, despite additional challenges, people with disabilities offer tremendous gifts. The arts provide a window for the world to view those amazing gifts.

Leisa Hammett-Goad, Partners 98-99, is a Nashville-based writer, advocate and the proud mother of Grace Goad, a seven-year-old with autism.

At Your Service

By Jan Blaustone

Wednesday, January 17, 2001, was our last day of life as we knew it. The “we” being myself and a one-year-old black Labrador Retriever named “Polo.” Two days before I had arrived in Alpharetta, Georgia, at Canine Assistants to train for two weeks with a dog that I would be taking home with me as my service dog. I was excited, curious, and most of all, anxious.

I had never been to Canine Assistants before but I had met their public relations person six months earlier at a media presentation where she introduced me to my sponsoring companies, Food Lion and Milk Bone (Nabisco), and a six-month-old bundle of fur, wet kisses, and big feet named Polo. After our brief time together, I immediately knew that Canine Assistants was the right service dog provider for me and I was hopeful that Polo would become the right dog for me as well. But she made it clear that dogs were not assigned to recipients until they attended camp, and that Polo was one of a dozen or more dogs who would be ready for partnering come January.

Six months later when it was time for me to train at camp, leaving work, my husband and our young son behind in Nashville, I felt like a college student leaving home for the first time. As hard as that morning was, I knew it had to be done if I were to learn the 85 commands that Polo and his friends had already mastered and commit myself to a service dog partnership that would return freedom and independence to my life.

The accessible, newly built hotel suite reserved in my name was reassuring when I arrived. There

were ten of us attending camp and we came from all over the country, some young and some of us not so young, but each with our own special circumstances and needs, and a hope that we would be able to establish a loving, working relationship with a dog in the days to come.

The first three days were full of nervous excitement for both the dogs and for us. In the mornings we listened patiently to lectures from various trainers and dog professionals, foster volunteers, and visits from other dog recipients. The second half of the day was spent working with the dogs who were in their kennels—some watching us, others barking or napping—while the lectures had taken place. We worked with five different dogs each day, running through routine commands while getting to know one another. I think the dogs were as anxious as we were to get together for a hand-in-paw work out.

My heart pounded each time I was with Polo as if I were a teen at her first dance. Does he remember me? Does he like me the best? By the third day, January 17, I found it hard to concentrate and even harder to keep an open mind when working with the other dogs.

Next, it was time to vote privately on our top three choices for our dog partner and it took us no time at all. Now the hard part began. The trainers and Canine Assistants staffers took all our votes and met behind closed doors for what seemed like forever, debating the pros and cons of each person and the dog who best matched

our needs, lifestyle and personality. It had been four years since I applied with Canine Assistants but the next couple of hours seemed even longer.

Finally, they reappeared but only to have us work with various dogs while they watched attentively.

Polo and I ran through all the commands as smooth as silk and then he climbed up on my power scooter and placed his huge paws around my neck.



He stayed in that position, licking my face and neck, as I drove back to my table. My heart was ready to burst. It's not that the other dogs, Labs and Goldens, weren't as good as Polo. They were all terrific. But Polo and I clicked. We liked each other from the start, but now, we had something going on. It just felt right, like he cared about me, too.

Again, the staffers disappeared for what seemed like an eternity. By now it was 5 p.m., and we were becoming extremely restless when the door opened and Jennifer Arnold, founder of Canine Assistants, asked us each to come forward and accept our new partner from its trainer. I held my breath as she finally called out, "Jan & Polo Blaustone."

There has never been a Kodak moment like the one I witnessed that afternoon. Trainers were crying and hugging us at the same time, dogs rode atop the laps of their new partners— everyone was relieved, exhausted and ecstatic at the same time. I couldn't wait to get back to my hotel room with Polo and see how he would react to being alone with me.

Jan Blaustone is a Nashville writer.

If you are contemplating how a service dog can add to your quality of life, stop by the Muscular Dystrophy Association's chat on Service Dogs (which I co-host) every third Friday of each month at 8PM CST at www.mdausa.org or contact Canine Assistants at www.canineassistants.org (800)771-7221 for the answers to all your questions.



Sarah Schide is a 2001 graduate of the Tennessee Youth Leadership Forum, a program for high school students with disabilities sponsored by the TN Council on Developmental Disabilities. She is from Ooltewah, TN, and is a senior at Ooltewah High School.

The Call

By Linda O'Connor Barnett

There should be a warning, a sign to let you know that life as you've known it for almost 17 years is about to end; but there wasn't. It was just an ordinary Sunday.

Saturday's rain that had snaked its way across Middle Tennessee had broken a heat wave, and a very humid day had turned into a warm, breezy summer evening. Mom and Dad came home from playing tennis at the country club. Dad retreated upstairs to the showers while Mom busied herself in the kitchen adding the finishing touches to our dinner. My sisters and brother were scattered throughout the upper-middle-class neighborhood like salt, flavoring the lives of their friends in one way or another. I was in my bedroom, ready to pounce on the phone if it rang, listening to the radio, playing the stereo, manicuring my nails, and packing for my seasonal trek to Michigan—all at the same time.

I grew up in Michigan, in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, where a lot of my relatives still live, and every summer after we moved South, I went back to visit. By staying with each relative or friends for two or three nights, I could reclaim Michigan as home for at least a month.

My purpose in going this summer was to help my Aunt Carol move into a new house. While she and her husband Val were transferring their belongings from their old apartment to their new home, I would entertain their two young sons, Phillip and Ronnie.

I had gone north to stay with her when she and Val got married. During the day when they were working, I walked to the bakery and loaded up on all kinds of sweets. You would think that I'd have gotten as fat as a butterball, but I was walking all over town and actually lost weight.

On Monday morning Mom and Dad would be taking me to catch a plane leaving the airport in Nashville about 7 a.m., which meant we had to leave home no later than 5:30. I would have

to be up at 4 in order to have time to shower, dress, and handle any last-minute catastrophes that would inevitably arise. So when my boyfriend phoned and asked me to go to mass with him that evening, Mom was adamantly against it. But I cried and pleaded and made all kinds of promises to be home early, and, like most mothers, she finally gave in. She watched me get into Ronnie's shiny new Corvette and leave the house about 6:30 p.m.

Mom went back inside, sat down at the kitchen table, and began to daydream. Her thoughts were rudely interrupted by the wail of a siren, and it sent a chill down her spine. She counted heads, like a mother hen. Let's see: Peggy and her friend Kevin are in the den watching Walt Disney, Jodi is in the backyard, Dawn is upstairs taking a shower. Linda— but it couldn't be Linda. She and Ronnie are on their way into town, and the ambulance is coming from another direction. Anyway, they've only been gone ten minutes. Despite Mom's attempts to calm herself, the ominous apprehension did not leave her.

A few minutes after 7, the phone rang.

"Mrs. O'Connor? This is the emergency room at Memorial Hospital. Linda has just been brought in. She's been in a car accident."

Mom suppressed her hysteria. "Is she all right?"

"I think she'll be okay," the nurse continued, "when we get this deep laceration on her right arm sutured. But she needs immediate surgery, and you or your husband will have to sign for it. Can you come down right away? What surgeon should we call?"

Dad had had minor surgery the previous year, done by Dr. John Ledbetter. His was the first name that came to Mom's mind. The emergency room nurse reached Dr. Ledbetter at a dinner party, and he left to meet Mom and Dad at the hospital.

Mom turned off the burners on the stove and called my Aunt Betty down the street, who was available to stay with the kids. Dad dressed hurriedly, hopping down the hall as he squeezed

into some shoes, and met Mom at the front door. She yelled into the den, "I called Betty and she'll be right up. Linda's been in an accident. I'll call you from the hospital."

"Where is she?" Dad came in the hospital door peering up and down the corridors. Dr. Dawson Durrett was there to meet him.

"Is she all right, Dawson?" Mom asked.

Dr. Durrett told Mom and Dad that my condition was much worse than they had first thought. "She showed all the signs of brain damage. I hope it's a hemorrhage and not contusions. She needs immediate attention."

He went on. "I took it on myself to call Dr. Arthur Bond at Vanderbilt. He's a top-notch neurosurgeon, one of the best in the country. He'll be waiting with his team. Don't worry, Jean, she's in very capable hands."

Dad peeked into the cubical, and saw me on the gurney. His legs gave way. It would be Mom who'd accompany me to Nashville.

With sirens blaring, we sped down the highway. Attendants rode in back with me to control the convulsions while Mom clung to her seat up front, clinging to her seat until her knuckles turned white. My Uncle Joe followed more slowly, bringing Dad.

The ambulance covered the distance from Clarksville to Nashville in 30 minutes. I was met by the doctors and taken into surgery.

Mom grew more anxious with each passing hour. About 2:30 a.m., Dr. Bond came out and confirmed what Dr. Durrett had feared. I had contusions of the brain. The surgeons had repaired a cracked rib and a ruptured lung. They had cleaned and closed the arm wound and some cuts around the base of the skull and on my back. But I was paralyzed on the right side of my body.

There was nothing that could be done about the brain injury except wait for the

swelling to subside. Dr. Bond expected that I would be in a coma for about two weeks. Allowing for some residual damage, I might recover, although he couldn't predict the extent or quality of the recovery.

Mom, Dad, and Uncle Joe followed a nurse to the critical care waiting room. They were advised that someone would have to wait there for at least 48 hours in case permission had to be granted for emergency brain surgery. At this point, my little-can-faze-me mother fell apart.

Dad and Uncle Joe returned home the next morning to convey the news to concerned friends. Mom stayed at the hospital near me.

I know I was supposed to be unconscious, but I saw lights. It seemed like a thousand balls of fire were suspended from the ceiling, and they were burning holes in my head.

Then, all of a sudden, I was on the ceiling, among the balls of fire. I saw myself being rolled down the hall on the gurney, while nurses ran alongside hanging i.v. bottles on poles, and doctors hurried along beside them. My dark hair contrasted the white of the sheets.

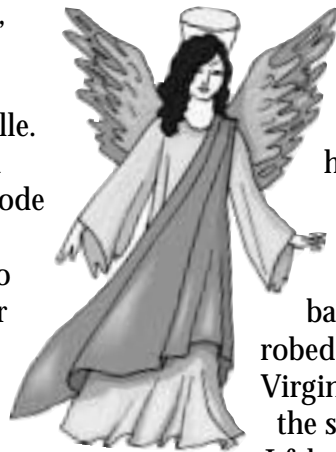
In what seemed like only seconds, I was back on the gurney and above my head, robed in blue and white, I saw the Blessed Virgin. Her alabaster-white skin accentuated the smile on her lips. When she smiled at me, I felt warm through and through. In the center of all that tumult, a feeling of peacefulness enveloped me.

Mom says it couldn't have happened; that, at the time, I couldn't possibly have seen anything. It's something I just wish would have happened, she insisted.

But I know what I saw.

The next thing I remember is hearing someone say, "How ya feelin', Shug?"

"The Call" is excerpted from Linda O'Connor-Barnett's autobiography, *I Can't Cry in Colors* (Clarksville, Tennessee: the author, 1989). Readers have called the book "an open and personal account of surviving closed-head injury," "a sensitive and realistic story."



Tiny Tuft

By Sofia Maneschi



Once upon a time there was a mouse whose name was Tiny Mouse. At first glance this name didn't really seem fitting, because she wasn't particularly small (compared to other mice). But her soul and every strand of her being cried out, "TINY MOUSE!," and so, she was.

Tiny Mouse lived in a cornfield in a hovel, a beautiful one with pressed flowers adorning the walls and unusually shaped twigs serving as sculptures. The chairs and tables were expertly crafted from blades of grass, woven and tucked. Tiny Mouse felt much like the other mice, but she did not look like the other mice. She had a large tuft of hair that grew between her two ears and hung down over her left eye. This tuft was terribly unruly and try as she might, she could not tame it. Tiny Mouse tried tying it back with strands of corn husks, braiding it, and even using tree sap to gel it back. But the tuft frizzed and sprang out of any constraints placed upon it. So, Tiny Mouse tried her best to live with it and not be too self-conscious in public when mice would stare at this strange little mouse, with her strange little coif. But one day looking in the huge mirror in the bathroom, Tiny Mouse was feeling especially agitated with her tuft and so, picked up a pair of scissors and lopped it off! No sooner had she done this than the tuft grew back! It was fuller and shinier than before! Tiny Mouse was incredulous. She again grasped the scissors firmly in her tiny mouse paw and cut it off a second time. Sure enough, back it grew looking fuller and shinier than before. Tiny Mouse only then realized that her tuft of hair was a magic tuft! She felt very special indeed. And so she came to embrace her magic tuft, and feel very proud of it when the other mice stared at her.

Sofia Maneschi is a 2000/01 graduate of Partners in Policymaking, and Miss Wheelchair 2000.

Faces of Feelings

By Vicki Aldridge

Families no matter how large or small
Families needing strength before they fall
Strength to build a foundation
To stand on

Learning about our feelings
Learning how we react to them
Learning new behaviors to change
the negative
Into a positive

Faces of feelings
Of people who listen to you,
Your voice, your feelings
Helping you to learn how you
React to them

Our souls were filled
With new work to do
And new understandings
Through and through.

Vicki Aldridge is the mother of three children with mental health diagnoses. She is from Nashville.

Silent Others

By Melissa Sue Masters

I am speaking from the silence
For the ones who have no voice
I am making them my business
I am making it my choice
To walk a mile in moccasins
Which I'm not forced to wear...
To customize decisions
To reflect how much I care.
I am seeking out the "silence"
To better understand the view
And to ask myself, "If it were me,
I wonder what I'd do"...
If I could live in both worlds,
Just one moment out of time...
If I could know what I know now,
But decisions were not mine...
Who could I trust this life to?
To whose hands, commit my care?
And I'd want to be found worthy
If it were me, seen standing there.
If it were me, with mighty pen in hand
Would my decisions show?
That I understand the issues...
That I really, truly know
That only for the hand of God
That person could be me.
That couple's child could be my child,
Who needs my empathy?
And ask God to grant me wisdom
About His children, in my care...
For the very way I live my life
Affects someone, somewhere
For the day I journey homeward
And this earthly life knows rest
I will face my Maker knowing
That I always gave my best
In mind, in heart and spirit
That I truly tried to see...
And made every choice I made
First, asking,
What if it was me?

Melissa Sue Masters is a business owner, songwriter, and poet. She lives in Lewisburg.

Ol Tennessee

By James W. Gunn

Oh, the whiff of home
That emotions cannot conceal
Cool mists mesmerize me
Here, by the riverside
Ol Tennessee

Springtime at Clingman's Dome
Fishing on the Buffalo
Sipping on Monteagle wine
Camping up on the plateau
Ol Tennessee

Listening to "Rocky Top"
Levitated all my memories
Give him six! and then one more
Pull one off the orange tree.
Ol Tennessee

Mighty walking horses step
Champions in their own right
Crowds in boxes second guess
Votes along with steaks and fries.
Ol Tennessee

Music dances throughout the night
Clapping hands and slapping knees
Metropolitan operas can't compare to
Lyrics of life's yesterdays
Ol Tennessee

Nowhere in this great land
North, east, south or west
Can compare with all the
History and pride I feel for
Ol Tennessee.

James W. Gunn is a lifelong Tennessee resident, having been born in Smyrna, and raised in Decherd near the foot of the Cumberland Mountains. He currently resides in Smyrna. Being a 25-year veteran of the Tennessee Highway Patrol, he has worked and lived in many different areas of the state. He currently holds the rank of sergeant and is in charge of the department's capital budget.



What to Do

By Chloe Ann McCraw

I'm lost in my feelings
 I'm the only one that can hear my mind
 Arguing with my heart
 In some desperate attempt to
 get them back together
 I start to cry and scream from inside
 I don't know were to start
 With my mind that is so stubborn that
 It won't listen to anyone's reasoning
 Or should I start with my heart
 Whose main goal is just to lie there
 And listen to the thoughts and memories
 Of the past, which makes me feel this way
 It hurts to see the heart
 Ripped in two and dying
 At an ever slow pace
 Memories of a time when the
 Heart and mind were not at this struggle
 When my mind was calm and at ease
 And the heart raced with hope and love
 Now I ask for your help
 In my desperate plea to have
 What I have lost
 The desire to live and love.

Chloe Ann McCraw was a delegate to the 2001 annual Youth Leadership Forum this past summer. The Youth Leadership Forum is a project of the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities.

To Make a Difference

By Bob Gammon

You are here because you care.
 Your time and talents you're willing to share.
 Goals and objectives you pursue
 "To make a difference" in the lives of a few.

You see the value in all humankind,
 So to give of yourself you don't really mind.
 You see past canes and wheelchairs and such
 To the hopes and dreams that each of us clutch.

About disabilities we all are aware,
 But it's abilities we all should compare.
 It's not what we aren't but what we are
 That gives us hope to carry us far.

Look around, What do you see?
 Others who are just like you and me.
 Goals and objectives we are willing to pursue
 "To make a difference" in the lives of a few.

Bob Gammon says of his poems, "I write to express my feeling toward people who are willing to share themselves in order to bring about a better quality of life for people with disabilities." Mr. Gammon retired in June of 2000, having taught for 31 years in the Memphis City Schools. He is an ADA consultant, doing business under the name Americans With Disabilities Management, Inc. He is a board member of the Mid-South Arc and Cloverbrook Center for the Blind.

Art Sought for On-Line Gallery

By Beth Stoffmacher, Technical Assistance Coordinator, NADC

The National Arts and Disability Center (NADC) is the national information dissemination, technical assistance and referral center specializing in the field of arts and disability. The NADC is dedicated to promoting the full inclusion of children and adults with disabilities into the visual-, performing-, media, and literary-arts communities. Its resource directories, annotated bibliographies,

related links and conferences serve to advance artists with disabilities and accessibility to the arts. We would like to announce our online gallery which highlights the work of artists with disabilities. We are currently looking for new art work to be showcased on our gallery. Please visit our site at <http://nadc.ucla.edu/gallery.htm> to download information about submitting your artwork.

Uncle Joe's Prayers

By Jane Smith

Every day he prays
But Saturday is special to him.
The week is over and the pressures of
Work gone for awhile.
Time for the real work
Of his life to be done.
Two hours in the morning
And two in the afternoon
Although Uncle Joe can't tell time
He just prays until his needs are expressed
And his soul is filled
And, oh, how his soul is filled!
Because, you see, he prays
With perfect confidence
(Some say the faith of a child)
That God listens and answers his prayers.

He prays for his family
Because he loves them enough
To care about their lives
Even when they do not
When others are unkind
and short tempered
With his slowness
He prays for the church
That there will be a great revival
And the people will turn back to God
And live in harmony.

He promises everyone he meets
'I'll pray for you,' and he does,
Every day, with double prayers
on Saturday
So when you meet Uncle Joe
Your life is going to change
And when things start looking up
Remember, it's someone
praying for you
And that someone,
due to complete faith,
Has a direct line to God.

Jane Smith's Uncle Joe is a 55-year-old gentleman with Down syndrome, with whom she grew up on a small farm in Tennessee. Uncle Joe has appeared in a series of her poems.

Dog Days

By Jim Summerville

The weather in the month of Aug
Shouldn't happen to a dog.

A bonfire in the desert sands
Plus the sizzle from frying pans
Pour down from Nashville
skies by noon.

You put your hounds out
to play in the grass
And they hope to catch a bug flying past,
But gosh almighty, it's hot as heck
Better to flop down up there
on the patio deck!

Glory and Frances, Roscoe and Pete
Look forward to running in the
snow and sleet—
But now they got,
in summer Ought One,
A hundred degrees out under that sun!

On the porch, there's fresh water
and plenty of it
And a basket of toys to
chew and gnaw at.
Pals to frisk with under
table and chair
Then an afternoon dream
in this hunter's lair—

Home after work you open the door—
And set four smiles to grinning,
Four tails to wagging,
four snouts to sniffing.
Supper's down! And noses dive in.
Sweet sleep will follow,
and a new day begin.

The love you give in this month of Aug
Should forever happen to every dog.

Jim Summerville serves as editor of *Breaking Ground*. His best friend is Grace, part Australian shepherd and part borzoi. "Like us Americans, she's a mix of backgrounds, Jim says proudly."



Who Took My Life

By Deborah Bass

Who took it and why?
 You could have your own
 if you would even try.
 Mine is like the clouds in the sky
 Here for now, gone in a flash.
 I can't even scratch it like a rash.
 It only took one second for it to be lost.
 I can't even write my own bills
 As I spend day and night taking pills.
 I don't walk for fear of taking spills.
 I have to concentrate on each step I take.
 I would be afraid to swim in the lake.
 I need no car, as I don't travel far.
 Give it back and I will deal with it alone.

Who took my life?
 Why can't I see where I'm going any more?

Deborah Bass graduated from the Traumatic Brain Injury Program at Tennessee Rehabilitation Center, in Smyrna, last spring. She writes, "I was left with left hemiparesis due to a stroke resulting from surgery for a second brain aneurysm in 1998. I am learning to become independent again."



Mary Tenpenny is a gifted seven-year-old from Murfreesboro who has PDD. She will be in the first grade this year and is a homeschooled student. She enjoys drawing, writing short stories, swimming, and playing outdoors. Last spring she received Honorable Mention in the Nashville Public Television's Reading Rainbow Young Writer Contest for her story "Being Trouble."

Tennessee Arts Commission

The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities proudly welcomes the Tennessee Arts Commission as a partner in this annual arts issue of *Breaking Ground*. Recently the editor spoke with Ms. Lisa Transley Hester, director of the Commission's Arts Access Program.

Q: *In general, what is the Commission's "Arts Access Program"? Who is eligible to apply to it?*

Ms. Hester: The Arts Access Program of the Tennessee Arts Commission provides aid to several underserved groups: people of color, including Native Americans, as well as children, senior citizens, and residents of rural or isolated areas, and people with disabilities. Aid is through arts project grants and technical assistance.

The Arts Access Touring Arts Program also provides financial assistance to encourage presentation of performing, visual, and literary arts.

A new grant category this year is directed toward individual professional artists. These fellowships will be given to outstanding artists from the above groups who live and work in Tennessee.

Q: *Can an organization apply for general operating support?*

Ms. Hester: Yes, a group can apply for funds in amounts up to 10 percent of its total cash operating expenses in its most recent fiscal year.

Q: *You mention technical assistance. Can you give us an example?*

Ms. Hester: An organization might apply to the Arts Commission for funds for special assistance needed to strengthen its operations. Some of those we assist this way bring in consultant help to provide a disinterested review of the group's projects and activities and make suggestions for ways to improve them.

Another, somewhat more informal example of our technical assistance is the database we



maintain of Tennessee artists with disabilities. From time to time, we are able to match them with opportunities to display or perform their work.

Q: In that connection, tell us about the Touring Arts Program.

Ms. Hester: We welcome applications from people with disabilities and organizations for assistance under this activity. The Touring Arts Program brings professional performers to communities across Tennessee by providing financial assistance to qualified presenters and sponsors.

Q: If an organization of or for people with disabilities wanted to apply for assistance, what qualifications would it need to meet?

Ms. Hester: Applicant organizations must be chartered in Tennessee and have the 501(c)3 designation from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Most groups comprising people with disabilities or advocating for them would probably be able to satisfy these two simple requirements.

For more information about the Tennessee Arts Commission, its Arts Access Program, and funding opportunities for arts events and activities, contact:

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 401 Charlotte Avenue
 Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0780
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The Commission's Web site provides a great deal of useful information and answers to "frequently asked questions." That URL is <http://www.arts.state.tn.us>

Remembering Shirley Ray

By Barbara Dyer with help from Laurie Draves and Wanda Rice

When we think of Shirley Ray, the image that appears is vibrant, spirited, passionate and steadfast in regard to the issues that she believed were crucial to the lives of persons with disabilities. We could always rely on her uncompromising and relentless presence to invigorate discussions about all children, but specifically those with disabilities and their right to a free and appropriate public education. Her experience grew through Partners in Policymaking, and she learned many new ways to influence systems and make changes in the life of her daughter, Stephanie, and others.

Shirley worked relentlessly to ensure that her daughter would benefit from any available educational opportunities possible. Stephanie's life came to include dance classes, computer training, vocational training through beauty school, life skills, academics, and friendships. Shirley was happy to talk with other families and help them realize the same benefits for their children.

Shirley's passing has been a tremendous loss to the disability community. Pushing the boundaries to create a new frontier of possibilities for persons with disabilities was Shirley's style. We can only hope that her work will inspire those who are left to carry on her passionate and persistent tradition of advocacy.

The authors were Partners classmates of Shirley Ray.



Shirley Ray, grandson, and daughter Stephanie.



(Above) Photograph by Christy Reece

Dennis Wells and his fiancé Jill Horter. Both have struggled for years with learning disabilities.



(Above) Photograph by Christy Reece

Taylor Reece and Drake Reece, age five days. This was Drake's first day home from the hospital, and his big brother was there to welcome him.

Christy Wells Reece is a graduate of the 2000-01 Partners in Policymaking Class. She lives in Cleveland, TN, where she is actively involved in advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities.



(Above) Photograph by Christy Reece

Taylor Reece, age three. Taylor has learning disabilities—and the most beautiful smile in the world.

(Below) Photograph by Christy Reece

Top to bottom: China Wells, Taylor Reece, Canaan Wells, Dennis Wells. Taylor is my son, the man is my brother, and the girls are his daughters. Everyone in this photograph has learning disabilities, ranging from Tourette Syndrome to ADHD to visual motor integration. For us, disability issues truly are "All in the Family," which is what I call this picture.



(Above) Photograph by Christy Reece

Sophia Maneschi of Nashville. She was Ms. Wheelchair Tennessee of 2000.



Michael Murphy, an attorney for Legal Assistance for the Elderly in Knoxville, kindly forwarded these pictures to *Breaking Ground*. They speak for themselves!



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About the Council:

The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities provides leadership to ensure independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the community through promotion of systems change.

The editor will consider for publication original contributions, including news and feature stories, short fiction, poetry, artwork, and photographs but reserves the right to edit or decline publication. Brief letters to the editor are also welcome. Opinions expressed in any published matter are the author's and not necessarily those of the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities or its staff.

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